

## **BIG HAND FOR THE DOCTOR: extract 1**

The Doctor and the Soul Pirate faced each other across an expanse of slick grey slate. The wind churned the mist into maelstroms and the great expanse of space yawned overhead. The Doctor's hat was snatched from his head and sent spinning over the hotchpotch of pitched roofs into a coal bunker thirty feet below.

*Where I shall probably soon follow,* the Doctor realised, but he had no alternative but to engage this pirate fellow. After all, the grotesque creature stood between him and his granddaughter.

'Igby kill white-hair,' said the foul creature from between clenched teeth. He was presumably referring to himself in the third person, and referring to the Doctor according to his hair colour, not randomly informing the Doctor of the existence of a man called Igby who had something against white hair.

'Release your prisoners,' the Doctor shouted into the wind. 'You don't have to live this way. You can be at peace.'

And even though the Doctor had always abhorred weapons, he wished he had something a little more substantial than a walking stick to fend off the blows that were coming his way.

'I like white hair. He funny,' shouted Igby, his own booming voice penetrating the elements. 'Come die, old man.'

*There is an excellent chance that I will do just that,* thought the Doctor grimly. *But despite the odds I simply must not lose. Sometimes there is more to life than the odds.*

The orange anti-grav beam pulsed, scorching a cylinder through the London fog, silhouettes of brainwashed abductees floating in its depths, dreamily certain that they were flying to their own tailor-made heavens.

*Jolly adventures, trees to climb, heroes all.*

How long would that fantasy sustain them before the reality of the Soul Pirates' ship manifested?

The Doctor advanced cautiously, picking his way along the slick ridge, keeping his cane extended all the while. As soon as he stepped out from behind the chimney, the full force of the elements battered him with sideswipes of wind and tacks of icy rain. He struggled to keep his balance on the treacherous slating, and each time a loose tile slipped from its moorings and smashed on the cobbles below the Doctor remembered the danger he was in.